

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /074 W

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R 211759Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 968

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE TEGUCIGALPA 3649

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: MELGAR WARNS PARTIES

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 3501, 3542

BEGIN SUMMARY. CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR STATED THAT POLITICAL PARTY DEMONSTRATIONS WERE PROHIBITED UNDER THE TERMS OF THE DECEMBER 4, 1972 DECREE. THE PARTY LEADERS PROTESTED THE STATEMENT, AND COMMENTED THAT IT THREATENED THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF ALL SECTORS OF HONDURAN SOCIETY. THE CENTRAL COMMITTEES OF THE PARTY ARE MEETING TO DECIDE ON THEIR COURSE OF ACTION. IT IS CLEAR THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL PROHIBIT AND PHYSICALLY IMPEDE AN ATTEMPT BY THE PARTIES TO CONTINUE WITH THEIR PLANNED DEMONSTRATIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. MINGOV ALONSO FLORES GUERRAS WARNED THE LIBERAL AND NATIONALIST PARTIES ON JULY 31 AND AUGUST 13 AGAINST HOLDING PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS. IN A RADIO INTERVIEW ON AUGUST 19 CHIEF OF STATE MELGAR REITERATED THE WARNING.

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HE STATED THAT PUBLIC MEETINGS BY THE POLITICAL PARTIES

WERE PROHIBITED BY THE DECEMBER 4, 1972 DECREE, AND THAT THE PARTY LEADERS HAD BEEN INFORMED OF THE PROHIBITION. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE TWO LETTERS FROM THE PARTIES REQUESTING A DIALOGUE WITH THE ARMED FORCES HAD NOT BEEN ANSWERED BECAUSE THE SUPERIOR DEFENSE COUNCIL HAD NOT MET TO DISCUSS THE MATTER.

2. PRIOR TO MELGAR'S COMMENTS, THE PARTY LEADERS HAD CRITICIZED THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION AS PRESENTED BY FLORES. RAFAEL BARDALES DUESO, THE PRESIDENT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONALIST PARTY, COMMENTED THAT THE PARTY WOULD CONTINUE WITH ITS PLANNED DEMONSTRATIONS IN CHOLUTECA ON AUGUST 31. RODOLFO ROSALES ABELLA, PRESIDENT OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE LIBERAL PARTY, STATED THAT HIS PARTY WOULD CONTINUE WITH ITS DEMONSTRATIONS IN DANLI AND OTHER CITIES.

3. AFTER MELGAR COMMENTS, THE CENTRAL COMMITTEES OF BOTH PARTIES WERE CALLED INTO SESSION TO REVIEW THE SITUATION AND DECIDE UPON A COURSE OF ACTION. BARDALES AND PINEDA STATED THAT THEY CONSIDERED MELGAR'S WARNING AS A SERIOUS THREAT TO THE PARTIES AND TO THE CONTINUANCE OF CIVIL RIGHTS IN THE COUNTRY. THEY WARNED THAT THE MASS MEDIA AND OTHER SECTORS WERE ALSO THREATENED BY THE LOSS OF SUCH RIGHTS. CONSERVATIVE LA PRENSA AND LA NOTICIA HAS BEEN VOCAL IN SUPPORTING THE AIMS AND VIEW OF BOTH PARTIES IN THEIR CONFLICT WITH THE

GOVERNMENT.

4. COMMENT: THE TWO WARNINGS OF FLORES AND THE SUBSEQUENT PUBLIC WARNING BY MELGAR CLEARLY INDICATES THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE HOLDING OF DEMONSTRATIONS BY THE PARTIES. THE QUESTION NOW REVOLVES ABOUT HOW THE PARTIES WILL REACT. IF THE PARTIES PERSIST IN HOLDING THEIR PLANNED MEETINGS THE GOH WILL PROHIBIT THE DEMONSTRATIONS AND PHYSICALLY IMPEDE PARTY MEMBERS FROM ATTENDING THEM IF THEY TAKE PLACE IN DEFIANCE OF THE BAN.
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